29 The nkɔ́kɔ́ is unknown beyond the Jwalɛ and the Lolɔ́kɔ. In that re-
87 gion the women tie a string (or a hair of beads) around themselves and attach a second piece of cloth to it.

Thus the male garment is a rudimentary sort of short, open on
291 the sides, while female dress is much more open. In general the efúfa is an appropriate protection of one's modesty, but it is inadequate in certain positions. (2)

(61)
196

2. It may be interesting to note that esɔ́ɔ mɛ́ɛmbɔyɛ́, or just plain esɔ́ɔ, which is the term for a man's garment, also indicates the male line of descent, while the female line is often designated by the term nkɔ́kɔ́ (sometimes by the word jwɛ́mɛtɔ derived from lɔ́mɛtɔ, "woman"). Let us add that lɔ́kúndɔ́ jwá nkɔ́kɔ́ means "pure, flawless Lonkundo, not corrupted by foreign influences." This expression should be compared with the following phrases: langue maternel, moedertaal, "mother tongue," etc.

29 At present the nkɔ́kɔ́ is no longer worn except by a few elderly
17 inhabitants of villages far from the main communication lines. Everywhere else the ancient mode of dress has been replaced by materials imported from Europe. The women wear at least a sangɔtshɔ́lɔ, a kind of short skirt which falls from their loins at least to the middle of their thighs if not further. Middle-aged men in the interior have simply changed the material of their garment but not its form. The younger ones, on the contrary, have frankly adopted the European mode of dress.

29 A married woman is not allowed to enter the village of her rela-
50 tives by marriage (bakilɔ́) or appear before them [54] without supple-
[128] menting her usual attire with one or more lɛlɛlɛkɛ (banana leaves cut
[131] into fringes). The term bakilɔ́ must be understood as it is meant by the Nkundɔ́; it excludes those with whom the wife may sometimes perform the sexual act and who are called "husbands" broadly speaking.

583 607 The mutuality of the rights of nkɔ̂lɔ́ and nkita is well expressed in the saying, ɔ́mbátɛ́ ńkɔátɛ́ wɛ̌, "possess me so that I may possess you." It is like do ut des.

583 607 182 (611) It is possible to judge from the preceding descriptions that the bride price has a considerable influence on family relations. Although the Nkundɔ́ system is clearly and manifestly patriarchal, the custom of the bride price and its logical consequences give it certain features which make one think of a matriarchy. This situation comes about quite naturally. Since the bride price is wealth it represents power in society. Through marriage this power is transferred from the husband's clan to the wife's, which is enriched in goods and persons by the bride price that has been received. In a sense, the husband is the provider of his wife's clan. And the child can truthfully maintain that his clan was enriched thanks to his father. As a matter of fact, for the Nkundɔ́, this consideration above all others is the basis for their demands of whatever rights they possess in the mother's clan. [170] The relationship between a woman and her nkita and between their respective children is founded solely on the bride-price system of marriage and has nothing to do with matriarchy. (1)

1. But the above considerations may furnish one source of explanation for the origin of that family system.

Consequently, it is unnecessary to erect complicated theories or engage in tortuous speculations in order to explain the creation of this system or to justify it. It is quite simply the outcome of the payment of a bride price in valuables that are of no use except in connection with a similar purpose.

Nevertheless, although the system of the nkita is a natural and logical consequence of marriage by means of a bride price, it is not a necessary consequence. The bride price exists in all the tribes of the Congo, but it does not seem to have resulted everywhere in the institution of the nkita.

583 174 114 607 What has given rise to this institution among the Nkundɔ́? Father Brepoels (loc. cit., p. 339) gives the following explanation:

M
684 untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form
582 relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

M
582 Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship
835 formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as
M
[611] from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply
M
[847] from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they
M
[602] attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended
M
[593] from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the
M
184 Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this
582 matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elíngá. (1)

P
[582] /

1. The Batswá are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

596 latter group. Another factor which reminds us of the wife's con-
614 tinuing membership in her original group is the connection, never completely severed, between the groups related by marriage, illustrated by the practice of gifts and counter-gifts which are all part of the bride price and the dowry. When she dies, the
[764] wife is buried in the soil of her group. In addition, the group membership of the wife is transferred to the children, although this does not have the same effects in economic and political terms. Matrilineal descent is important in relation to marriage
[611] restrictions, certain avoidance practices which are passed on through the wives, and also certain privileges. Quite a large number of persons has settled permanently in the group of their mother or that of their grandmothers.

The decisive factor that makes the term "large family" unsuitable is the "eternal" character of the A-E groups of the Ekonda. However, the subdivisions of the A-groups which live together in a common homestead (see p. 10) may be regarded as large families in the sense used by Thurnwald, Kirchhoff, and Murdock.

Kinship Group

614 In the definitions of the term "family" quoted above,
121 we already learned something about Thurnwald's concept of a kinship group, but there is an additional reference to the technical term "kinship group" ["Sippe"]" (p. 17 f.) (24):

24. Menschliche Gesellschaft, Vol. 4.

"...A kinship group is defined as a clan (q.v.) which is not politically independent. Usually the loss of independence is caused by the distribution of the people of the clan among the various settlements. A kinship group is held together by the consciousness of being descended from the same ancestors and by their common cult of the ancestors. The kinship group is of special importance for the regulation of marriage (q.v.). -- A kinship group may be divided into kinship subgroups (large